

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic
Monument Focus Provides Direction for
the Coming Year

Mount St. Helens FY 2014 Focus

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Focus for 2014

The Five Year “Valued Places” Pilot Charter tasks the Monument with the primary objectives of: Expanding community involvement and satisfaction; Building broader partnerships and community relationships; and Leveraging FS investments to foster contributions of money, talent, and support from our partners and communities.

Over the course of the last three years, the Monument has made significant headway in these key areas. Strong relationships with the local community are enabling increased partner contributions to Monument operations, financial investments to improve facilities and infrastructure are paying dividends through expanded Monument capabilities, and new recreation and education programs have received rave reviews. In all, the future for the Monument is looking bright.

In 2014, the monument will continue to progress as team members look for new ways to connect with the community, build new partnerships, and enhance existing facilities, while continuing to explore new opportunities. The FY14 focus is categorized by the specific focus areas as outlined in the Strategic Investment Plan.

Johnston Ridge Observatory

- Continue to work closely with the Cowlitz County Economic Development Council to organize Music on the Mountain events with expanded capacity through Kelso Rotary volunteers.
- Work with the EDC to develop a handbook that describes procedures, tasks, and volunteer roles for the amphitheater events.
- Develop a strategic plan for how the Monument will continually manage and update its exhibits.
- Enhance the visitor experience by continuing the Valuing Places Ranger program, continuing the use of the volunteers trained through the Volcano Naturalist Program, and updating facilities through National Priority List funding.

MSH Science and Learning Center at Coldwater

- Work with the Mount St. Helens Institute (MSHI) and Cowlitz EDC to recruit volunteers for the Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater, to have enough trained volunteers to have the facility be fully operational for the summer.
- Increase the number of days/nights of use at the Science and Learning Center with programs and activities of MSHI, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), schools, universities and other groups.
- Increase revenue by renting space for education and business functions under the MSHI Granger Thye Permit.
- Complete the long term business plan for the future use of the Coldwater Facility and begin the steps to initiate the plan.
- Increase the number of returning visitors by expanding programs offerings, identifying potential new campgrounds, and increasing the amount of public outreach concerning the Science and Learning Center at Coldwater.

East Side Visitor Facilities

- Begin construction of the replacement Cascades Peaks Information Center.
- Analyze fee collections and identify ways to increase compliance/collections.
- Evaluate the management and usage of Ape Cave, incorporating the White Nose Syndrome management strategy.
- Identify the replacement structure needed at Marble Mountain Sno-Park

Partnerships/Volunteers

- Increase attendance at events having a strong youth component.
 - In partnership with the Cowlitz County Economic Development Council, develop outreach materials and conduct an outreach campaign to share with our publics the wide array of recreation opportunities in their backyard. Include wellness as a vital piece of this campaign.
 - Develop and promote a project ready list for engagement of local volunteers for community service.
 - Increase the utilization of existing and new partners to supplement the Monument workforce.
 - Work with Public Affairs shop to develop stories for the web and media that highlight partnership successes at Mount St. Helens. Leverage these success stories to grow partnerships.
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Interpretation/Education

- Continue into second year of the Volcano Naturalist Program, with greater investment by the Mount St. Helens Institute. Add advanced training opportunities for certified Volcano Naturalists in order to reconfirm their volunteer commitment.
- Work with the Cowlitz County Economic Development Council and Mount St. Helens Institute to engage student volunteers in meaningful opportunities around the Monument and in the classroom.
- Expand collaboration with the SW Washington Workforce Development Council and Washington STEM to include education partners to develop STEM educational activities and curriculum at the Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater.

Trails/Campgrounds for Public Access

- Conduct NEPA analysis on several projects which expand and improve access to Mount St. Helens.
 - These projects include: Camping opportunities around Coldwater Lake, a trail re-establishing access to Castle Lake, and a trail closing the loop between the South Coldwater and Lakes trails.
- Develop new opportunities for partners and volunteers to provide trail maintenance to supplement Forest Service efforts.
- Create a list of shovel ready volunteer projects so as to facilitate maximum volunteer and partner participation.
- Work with volunteers and the Washington Trails Association to complete and market the Ape Cave Viewpoint Trail.
- Identify opportunities for trail system enhancements and involve partners and volunteers as much as possible.

Roads & Bridges

- Identify potential management issues and plan for future FR 90, FR 25, and FR 99 road repair and construction.
- Identify visibility issues of scenic overlooks and vistas and develop investment plan to resolve issues.
- Identify and develop a current road assessment /investment projects and develop a shovel ready projects list.

SR 504 Utility Corridor

- Finalize negotiations with the Cowlitz PUD regarding placement of usage meter and transfer of power-line.
- Develop plan for the maintenance of power-line from Coldwater to JRO not covered by PUD.

Coldwater Lake

- Incorporate Coldwater Lake into the Monument's fee program.
- Conduct NEPA on developing campsites around lake.

Outfitters Guides and Enhancing Visitor Services

- Depending on outcome of the outfitter-guide needs assessment (to be completed Spring 2014), develop prospectus and/or opportunities for new outfitter-guide services on the Monument.
 - Ensure these opportunities meet Monument goals to provide world class education, research, and recreation, as well as minimize impacts in sensitive environments.
- Establish streamlined procedures for awarding new permits for outfitter guides and educational programs at the Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater.

Safety

- Work closely with Forest Headquarters Safety Program Manager to increase safety awareness and buy-in from employees.
- Plan and execute, with the Forest Headquarters as lead, a volcano readiness meeting with agency and community partners.

Resource Protection Investments

- Develop a decontamination action plan that proactively prepares for 'what if' restrictions resulting from White Nose Syndrome.
 - Develop strategies to fund the invasive species program that have been previously been funded by RAC.
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